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Questions relating to information

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

During the first half of 2008, the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat continued to highlight United Nations priority issues in the areas of peace and security, development and human rights. It paid particular attention to promoting the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the sixtieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping.

The network of United Nations information centres, services and components played a key role in this effort. Better equipped and better trained, they are now increasingly integrated with the United Nations country teams. The Department further expanded its media services, widening the daily delivery of news and information products via radio, television and print media.

Most notably, there was a marked increase in the use of the United Nations website over the past six months, with a growing number of visitors viewing it as an essential resource for news and information. The Department worked in close cooperation with non-governmental organizations and civil society to expand its outreach and promotional activities. Using the Internet and videoconferencing, it was able to connect with an ever increasing number of young people in a dialogue on issues that matter most to them.

* A/63/150 and Corr.1.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 62/111 B of 17 December 2007, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its thirtieth session and to the Assembly at its sixty-third session on the activities of the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat and on the implementation of the recommendations contained in that resolution. Accordingly, the Department of Public Information introduced two reports for consideration by the Committee on Information at its thirtieth session, held from 28 April to 9 May 2008 (A/AC.198/2008/2 and 3). The deliberations of the Committee with regard to those reports are reflected in its report to the Assembly.[1]

2. The present report, prepared in response to the above-mentioned resolution, updates the information provided to the Committee on Information at its thirtieth session and describes activities undertaken by the Department of Public Information in the first half of 2008 through its three subprogrammes: strategic communication services, news services, and outreach and knowledge-sharing services.

II. Strategic communication services

A. Thematic issues

Sixtieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping

3. The Department of Public Information cooperated closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, both of the United Nations Secretariat, on activities designed to mark the sixtieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping (see box I). The global year-long observance was launched on 29 May 2008, the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. The Departments produced coordinated products which complemented each other in design and messaging, including a special website, a poster, a 12-minute documentary video, a press packet and a photo exhibition on historical and contemporary issues in peacekeeping, displayed at United Nations Headquarters in New York with the assistance of the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations. The exhibition highlighted the role of major troop-contributing countries, including Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Pakistan and South Africa. The Department of Public Information, in consultation with relevant United Nations information centres, also prepared regional versions of the exhibition for the Arab world, Latin America, South Asia and South Africa. The Department of Public Information also assisted in the creation and dissemination of a public service announcement on the work of United Nations peacekeepers, which had been sponsored and produced by the United Nations Foundation.

4. As part of the ongoing observance, the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information led a seminar on peacekeeping in Tokyo in June, co-sponsored with the Foreign Ministry of Japan and United Nations University, which featured the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and other senior officials, those of United Nations peacekeeping missions. The event was covered by the Japanese media.

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/63/21).

Box I

United Nations information centres observe the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

In commemoration of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers and the sixtieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping, United Nations information centres carried out numerous activities, often in partnership with local government authorities, civil society and information components of United Nations peacekeeping operations. For example:

- **Asunción.** The United Nations Information Centre, Asunción cooperated with the Joint Peacekeeping Training Centre of the Paraguayan Armed Forces in a live television debate featuring military personnel
- **Brazzaville.** The United Nations Information Centre, Brazzaville organized a lecture and ceremony in collaboration with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence
- **Brussels.** The United Nations Regional Information Centre, Brussels hosted a round table, launched a photo exhibition and translated information materials into several European languages
- **Islamabad.** The United Nations Information Centre, Islamabad arranged a briefing session with the Senate of Pakistan and launched a photo exhibition at the Parliament House

Ending sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel

5. The Department of Public Information, in cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, continued to raise awareness on progress in ending sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel by means of public information materials and press briefings, both at Headquarters and in the field. It has responded quickly and robustly with factual information, while acknowledging that incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse continue to constitute a serious issue that does grave harm to the image of the United Nations. The Department of Public Information, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support continue to work on improving communications on the issue, which was also a major topic at a training course in June 2008, organized by the Department of Public Information for the chiefs of public information components of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The 24 senior public information officials from 19 United Nations peacekeeping missions and political offices who participated in the workshop discussed ways to improve strategic communications for and on peacekeeping in the field.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

6. The Department of Public Information has been working with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support and the Peacebuilding

Support Office on creating policy and best practices for United Nations radio stations in peacekeeping operations, of which there are currently five. It has also been supporting those radio stations and held a film screening, featuring the award-winning Canadian documentary entitled *Shock Waves*, and seminar on radio and peacebuilding, at United Nations Headquarters in April. The Department of Public Information has also been working with the peace operation in Sierra Leone on transferring the popular United Nations radio station in that country to local ownership upon the scheduled withdrawal of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), replaced by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) at the end of September 2008.

7. The Department of Public Information, working in close collaboration with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, helped 12 peace operations create content management system websites, so that eventually all peace operations websites would be easy to use and would have a "branded" United Nations look.

8. The website for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), which is maintained by the Department of Public Information, received 100,000 hits in the first six months following the establishment of the operation on 31 December 2007.

Millennium Development Goals

9. The focus of communications work for the Millennium Development Goals in 2008 has been the lead-up to and planning for the High-level Event to be held on 25 September, which is being coordinated by the Department of Public Information through a United Nations Communications Group Task Force. In the first half of the year, the Department worked with the Office of the President of the General Assembly to promote the Assembly's thematic debate on the Millennium Development Goals in early April. The Department produced media materials and helped to organize the press conference and media outreach. Coverage included stories by CNN, the Associated Press, Inter Press Service, AFP, Reuters, the Voice of America, Channel 4 (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), *The Hindu* (India) and Prensa Latina.

10. The Department of Public Information worked with the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on designing and publishing the recommendations of the MDG Africa Steering Group in a format suitable for high-level use, as well as press materials. The Department, with on-the-ground support from the United Nations Information Centre, Cairo, helped organize the press launch held at the African Union Summit in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, on 1 July, with the Deputy Secretary-General, the Chairpersons of the African Union and African Union Commission, and the President of the African Development Bank. There was strong media coverage, especially in Africa, and internationally through AFP, Xinhua, BBC World News, Reuters TV, Al Jazeera and National Public Radio. The 2008 Millennium Development Goals Report will be launched in September as a curtain-raiser to the High-level Event. The Department of Public Information is organizing media outreach at Headquarters and by United Nations information centres, and is producing a press kit and special website, as well as redesigning the top Millennium Development Goals website

(www.un.org/millenniumgoals) to serve as a gateway to United Nations system work on the Goals.

New Partnership for Africa's Development

11. The Department's efforts to raise public awareness of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/54/204, annex) and support for its implementation resulted in broader dissemination of information on the goals, challenges and achievements of the New Partnership during the first six months of 2008, compared with the same period last year. Some 48 short feature articles written by the Africa Section were published 271 times in major English-, French-, and Kiswahili-language media, primarily in Africa, Europe and North America. African media picking up the Department's stories included *Public Eye* (Lesotho), *The Punch* and *Thisday* (Nigeria) and *Mail and Guardian* online (South Africa).

12. In this regard, particularly notable is the role played by the Department's quarterly magazines, *Africa Renewal* and *Afrique renouveau*. Readership grew both from individual subscriptions and through distribution of the magazine at major Africa-related conferences. In 2008, these included the Europe Africa Business Summit in Hamburg, Germany (28-30 April) (www.eabs.info); the Africala Film Festival, Mexico City; and the fifth annual African Economic Forum, held at Columbia University, New York City (www.sipa.columbia.edu/aef).

13. The Department also sought to raise international awareness on Africa's special needs in relation to climate change. *Africa Renewal* and *Afrique renouveau* ran articles examining how the conservation of Africa's forests can help counter global climate change, highlighting the work of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with African Governments aimed at protecting forests that shelter income-producing commodities, such as tea in Kenya. A second piece examined World Bank-managed carbon-trading facilities. Another article, published in July, explained the working of the Clean Development Mechanism established under the Kyoto Protocol[2] to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[3] and how Africa can take better advantage of its funding.

14. A shortened version of "Saving Africa's forests" was published in 12 publications and websites in Canada, Ghana, Mali, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, including the internationally recognized Africa-interest portal www.allafrica.com, a major United Kingdom-based educational website devoted to sustainable forest management (www.forests.org), *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* (Ghana), and *L'Essor* (Mali).

Climate change

15. The Department of Public Information has continued to serve as convener for a communications task force of 17 United Nations entities working on climate change which coordinates and implements a system-wide strategy for communications on the issue. The Department, with the inter-agency task force in the lead, maintains a website detailing the work of the United Nations system on climate change. Key events in the climate change agenda that could benefit from joint communications efforts have been identified by the task force, including the fourteenth session of the

[2] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Poznań, Poland, in December 2008. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, recognizing the role of the United Nations Communications Group Task Force on Climate Change, has requested it to serve as a co-convener for the cross-cutting issue of public awareness in the area of climate change.

Sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

16. The Department of Public Information has been co-sponsoring, with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the New Human Rights Dialogue Series, a monthly series of discussions at United Nations Headquarters on pressing human rights issues, which have attracted large and diverse audiences of delegates, United Nations staff, students and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Many of the Department's field offices have also been organizing events in support of the year-long campaign, including:

- **The United Nations Information Centre, Bujumbura**, which organized a workshop for local media on human rights
- **The United Nations Information Centre, Dhaka**, which held a poetry reading
- **The United Nations Information Centre, Maseru**, which organized a youth essay competition
- **The United Nations Information Centre, Bucharest**, which organized a human rights documentary festival
- **The United Nations Regional Information Centre, Brussels,** whose "Know Your Rights" website (www.knowyourrights2008.org), which showcases anniversary events in Europe and special features such as an interactive quiz on human rights, was expanded to include eight European languages

Rwanda Outreach Programme

17. The Kinyarwanda, French and English versions of the "Lessons from Rwanda" exhibition, which focuses on the history of the Rwanda genocide and its lasting impact on survivors, were exhibited in Rwanda at two university campuses, at a seminar of Rwandan Supreme Court judges and at the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission centre, with assistance from the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda information office in Kigali (see also box II). The Department also prepared and launched the "Lessons from Rwanda" website in all six official languages. Other materials, including two posters focusing on the lasting impact of the genocide, were also distributed. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda information office reported that having these materials available in Kinyarwanda "was remarkably appreciated by the participants" and that the Outreach Programme was "very important for the promotion of unity and reconciliation in Rwanda". The exhibition was also well received when it was shown at the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, South Africa, in January 2008 and in Toronto, Canada, in June 2008.

18. A nine-minute television piece, presented by United Nations Television (UNTV), entitled "Rising from the ashes", depicting the story of one 29-year-old

genocide survivor and her struggle for justice and reconciliation, was finalized and made available online.

Box II
"Visions of Rwanda" photo project

With the help of the Department of Public Information, survivors of genocide in Rwanda recently came together to document their day-to-day life, hopes, dreams and memories as part of a "Visions of Rwanda" photo project. The 12 participants included orphans, widows, rape and assault survivors, and a *gacaca* judge, as well as perpetrators, some of whom were responsible for the deaths of family members of other participants. The participants, many of whom had never before used a camera, were trained by a United Nations facilitator and given general photography tips; they were then free to document whatever topics they deemed to be important to them. Examples of subjects portrayed in the 1,000 plus photographs were local prisoners, children, weddings, memorial sites and the remains of family members. The photographs taken by the participants and their stories will be turned into an online feature and a hard-copy exhibition. The equipment used in the programme was donated to a local orphanage and university in Kigali.

Secretary-General's campaign to end violence against women

19. The Department of Public Information supported the launch of the Secretary-General's system-wide campaign to end violence against women on 25 February 2008. Information materials were developed in six languages, and a logo and website (endviolence.un.org) were created with inter-agency information and links. Several information centres and services — including ones in Ankara, Baku, Brussels, Cairo, Lima, Manama, Moscow, Ouagadougou, Tehran, Vienna and Washington, D.C. — mobilized public awareness on the campaign through country-specific press conferences, seminars, film screenings and public events.

Promotion of the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council

20. The Department has increased its promotion of the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as both bodies have expanded their deliberations utilizing innovative formats. In this regard:

(a) The Department of Public Information worked to promote three General Assembly thematic debates held this year on climate change, producing press releases and organizing press conferences, media outreach and interviews. Media coverage of the first debate, held over three days in February, was extensive in the local New York press, including *The New York Times*, *The Daily News* and *Newsday*, as well as through the Associated Press, Reuters, Prensa Latina and Xinhua;

(b) The second debate, on the role of private investment, held on 9 June, was covered in many developing-country outlets such as Xinhua, AllAfrica, Associated

Press of Pakistan and the Indo-Asian News Service; the third debate, held on 8 July, which focused on vulnerable States, was also covered by international media;

(c) The high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, held from 10 to 12 June, was another major focus of activity for the Department of Public Information, which worked with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Office of the President of the General Assembly to produce a press kit and website, and to set up numerous press conferences and media interviews;

(d) The special briefing held by the Economic and Social Council on the global food crisis, on 20 May 2008, was promoted by the Department of Public Information through the distribution of press materials and the statements and video messages of the main participants, taking advantage of the strong media interest in this issue. Over 100 news articles in all regions were published within 24 hours of the event. For the high-level segment of the Council (30 June-3 July), including the annual ministerial review and Development Cooperation Forum, a press kit was produced and a number of press conferences were organized.

United Nations Communications Group

21. The seventh annual meeting of the United Nations Communications Group at the level of principals was held on 16 and 17 June 2008 in Paris at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Hosted by UNESCO, the meeting was attended by 37 Communications Group member organizations. The meeting agreed to:

(a) Forward a note to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, confirming and outlining the Group's collaboration in the development and implementation of a United Nations system climate change communications work programme for 2008-2009. This work programme on public information and advocacy will form part of the larger United Nations system-wide efforts on climate change;

(b) Inform the United Nations country teams through the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office (UNDOCO) of a standard operating procedure for communicating together in times of crisis, upon its final approval by the Group;

(c) Set up a working group on communications aspects of "Delivering as One" United Nations pilots, to be facilitated by the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office (UNDOCO), with a view to exploring means to increase internal and inter-agency communications in support of "Delivering as One" United Nations pilots, as well as to strengthen the United Nations Communications Group at the country level;

(d) Support the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) as the lead United Nations agency in the organization of the United Nations Pavilion at Expo 2010 in Shanghai, China.

22. The Department continued to expand its efforts to coordinate messaging and strategies through the system-wide United Nations Communications Group, which included the convening of special meetings of inter-agency communications group

task forces and working groups on, inter alia, the Arab region, climate change, human and avian influenza, the Millennium Development Goals and public opinion polling (see also box III).

Box III
An emergency alert system

In the face of a public-health emergency, mass communication is among the most important factors in respect of managing risk and saving lives, and it can even be the most critical factor, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). A task force of the United Nations Communications Group is responding to this imperative with a set of systems to facilitate fast, clear and consistent messaging in the event of a global humanitarian crisis, such as a highly contagious influenza pandemic. A dedicated, secure Web-based facility allows specialized agencies to exchange information, talking points and press releases as they are issued, or in advance of their issuance. An alert system has also been set up which can notify participants at any time or on any day of the week, within minutes after an emergency has been identified.

B. United Nations information centres

Strengthening communications capacity

23. In the first half of the year, nine librarians and seven webmasters from information centres attended workshops on project management in New York conducted by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and under the United Nations external training programme, respectively. By including staff from information centres that have been given a greater regional role, namely, those at Brussels, Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria, the Department has sought to "train the trainers", enhancing their ability to provide guidance and technical assistance to other centres within their respective regions. For example, those information centres in sub-Saharan Africa without technical staff now send their news and images to the webmaster at the centre in Pretoria for the purpose of updating their websites remotely.

Enhancing the use of new information and communications technologies

24. To strengthen communications infrastructure and enhance the use of information and communications technology, the Department, in cooperation with the Information Technology Services Division at Headquarters, provided 152 computers and related equipment to 26 information centres in developing countries. As a result of their enhanced capabilities, internet corners have been set up at information centres in 20 countries, including Argentina, Ghana, Egypt, Lebanon, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, South Africa and Switzerland. These Internet corners provide journalists, researchers, students and the general public with access to the Internet and to electronic information concerning the United Nations.

25. The Department has also revamped the United Nations information centres website, highlighting their role in enhancing multilingualism. It now has links to

electronic versions of information materials produced in some 80 local languages. The creation of dedicated e-mail format, deployed in 2008, has also resulted in consistent, easily identifiable e-mail addresses for the information centres. Further:

- In February, using a Web conferencing tool, staff from the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels and from the Information Centre in Mexico City participated in the DPI/NGO communications workshop held in New York to discuss practical ways in which non-governmental organizations associated with the Department could collaborate with the network of information centres. In May, staff from the Department in New York joined a workshop for model United Nations organizers held in Mexico City via videoconference.

III. News services

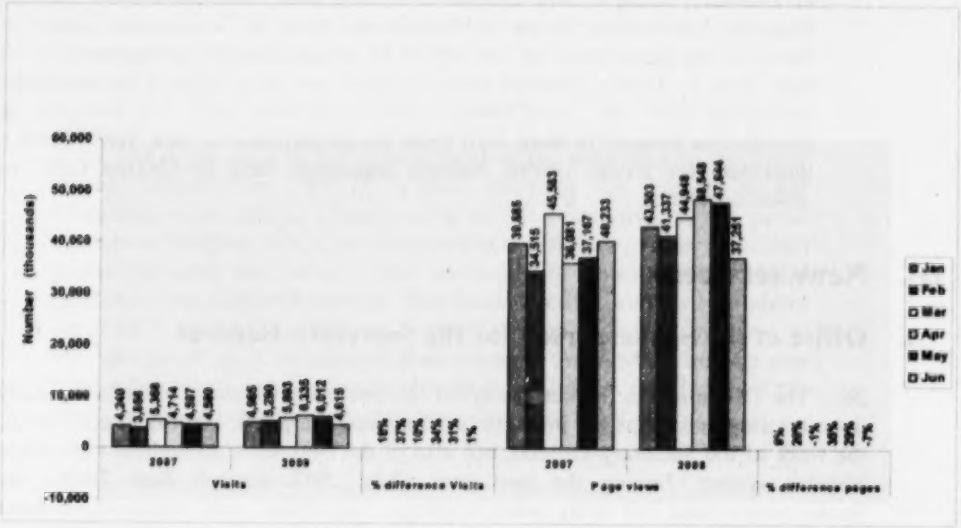
A. Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General

26. The Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General conducts the daily noon briefing and keeps the press, delegations and the public informed, not only of the work of the Secretary-General, but also of developments throughout the United Nations system. During the past year (July 2007 through June 2008), the Spokesperson held 248 daily press briefings. The Office also organized 45 press conferences given by the Secretary-General at Headquarters and abroad, 98 press briefings by Member States, 125 press conferences by senior officials and 10 background briefings. In addition, the Office coordinated 71 press encounters and 117 press interviews with the Secretary-General at Headquarters and during his official visits to Member States. The Office also coordinated the logistics related to participation of groups of journalists who accompanied the Secretary-General on 11 of his trips overseas.

B. United Nations website

27. The past six months have witnessed a marked increase in the use of the United Nations website (www.un.org), with a growing number of visitors viewing it as an essential resource for news and information in various languages and in multiple forms (figure I). Alongside the general increase in website traffic, one trend in particular stood out: an upsurge in the use of video materials. An average of over 32,000 video clips were viewed every 24 hours, representing a 116 per cent increase in the number of video clips viewed per day. Among the contributing factors was the extended webcast coverage provided by the Department of the sessions of the Human Rights Council and United Nations conferences held away from Headquarters.

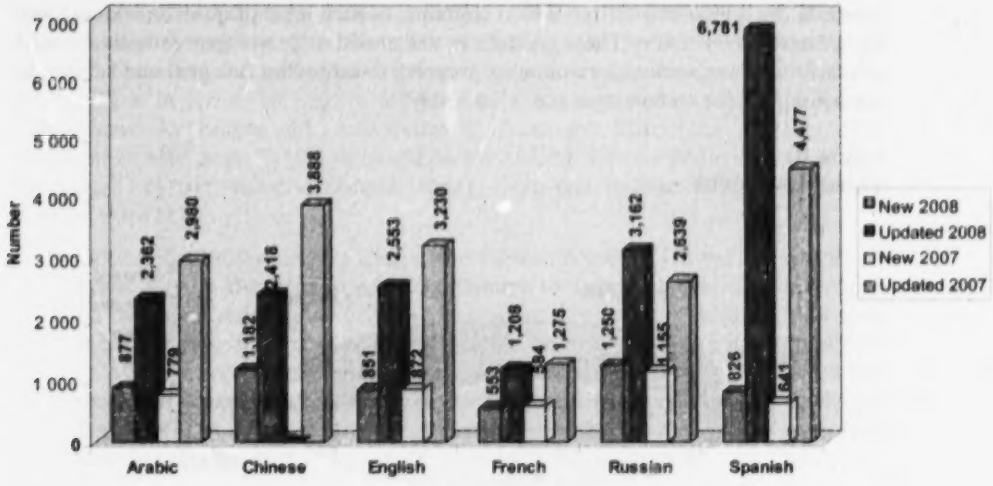
Figure I
Visits to and page views at www.un.org, 2007-2008
(Thousands)



28. Between January and June 2008, 23 multilingual websites were created or redesigned in response to an array of new developments or special events (see also figure II). Those included the sixtieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping (1948-2008), the Secretary-General's High-level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis, the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[4] the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, the International Year of Languages and International Women's Day.

[4] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

Figure II
New and updated web pages in the first six months of 2008 and 2007



Towards website governance and a content management system (CMS)

29. The rapid growth of the United Nations website, which was accompanied by a proliferation of online material produced by various departments and offices, has resulted in the development of a structurally and navigationally complex site, with multiple levels of responsibility for design and content delivery. At present, there are close to 200 content providers with posting rights to un.org, maintaining websites with different designs, and no overall branding. The Department of Public Information is responsible for the contents and presentation of the top layers of the site, while the other Departments maintain their own sites. In order to address the need for adherence to established Web publishing guidelines, the Department is moving forward with a comprehensive Web governance mechanism composed of two tiers: a policy tier, with the authority to promulgate, monitor and enforce standards; and a working-level tier, which receives incident reports and reviews and recommends standards and follow-up measures.

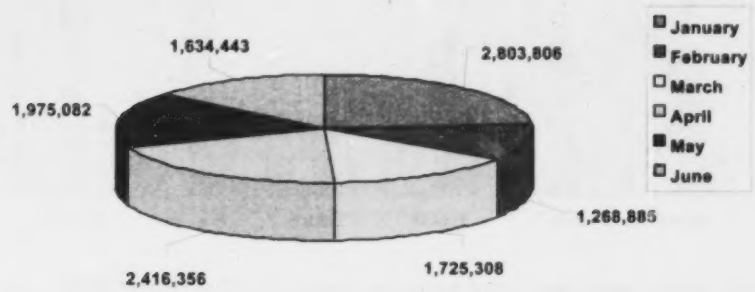
30. Parallel efforts are proceeding with the Information Technology Services Division in the Office of Information and Communications Technology for the implementation of the enterprise content management system, which includes a Web component. Its implementation, expected in 2009, will assist in the enforcement of agreed standards and ensure uniformity of statistics and efficient analysis of website usage.

Accessibility for persons with disabilities

31. The Department is continuing its efforts to ensure accessibility of the United Nations website in the six official languages by persons with disabilities. The objective of the Department of Public Information is to comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)

standards, which at the present time are the only standards enjoying worldwide recognition. Currently, all new pages created by the Web Services Section are compliant with level 1, and most comply with level 2 of the Consortium Guidelines.[5] In order to assist other departments and offices in producing accessible Web content, the Web Services Section created a special website, www.un.org/webaccessibility/, which contains, in part, a set of guidelines developed by a Section task force. These guidelines are aimed at promoting compliance with accessibility requirements, monitoring progress in achieving this goal and serving as a teaching aid for webmasters and related staff.

Figure III
Video views, 2008



Internet broadcasting

32. During the first half of 2008, live and archived videos produced by UN Webcast (www.un.org/webcast) registered a total of 11,823,880 video views by visitors from 203 countries and territories (see figure III). The e-mail webcast alert system gained 1,000 new subscribers, representing a trend that should enable UN Webcast to quickly restore the database of subscribers which had experienced a 20 per cent drop, compared with last year, owing to a technical maintenance problem. The sessions of the Human Rights Council (Geneva), the twelfth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Ghana) and the recently concluded high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council (New York), focusing on the 2008 annual ministerial review, were among the major conferences for which comprehensive webcast coverage was provided.

C. Radio, television and photo services

United Nations Radio

33. Striving to make full use of the latest advances in communications and Internet technologies, the Department continued to pursue a two-pronged approach aimed at

[5] In order to comply with Web content accessibility requirements, all level 1 checkpoints *must* be satisfied. Otherwise, one or more groups will find it impossible to access information in a given document. Level 2 checkpoints *should* be satisfied in order to remove significant barriers to accessing Web documents.

delivering its radio programming to the broadest possible range of audiences. On the one hand, it worked to expand its partnerships with international broadcasters in the six official languages, as well as in Portuguese and Kiswahili. At the same time, it relied on the Internet as an effective means of bringing audio content to its listeners around the world, in part through the launch of a redesigned United Nations Radio website in seven language versions: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese. The fact that proceedings in the Security Council, the General Assembly and other forums, as well as press conferences, are now available on the Web in broadcast quality for use by media organizations has enabled the Department to phase out audiocassettes from its distribution pattern. The Department also posts its programming on the United Nations Radio website in four languages of Asia, namely, Bangla, Hindi, Urdu and Indonesian, and in French Creole. Further:

- During the 2008 events in Kenya, the Kiswahili unit of United Nations Radio began a daily five-minute news programme to update audiences in the region on the latest developments. This programme proved very popular with local radio stations, with new affiliates signing up to carry it. As the global food crisis came to the fore of the United Nations agenda, United Nations Radio produced a seven-part series that showed the human face of the crisis and highlighted the challenges facing the international community as it took steps to tackle the problem.

United Nations Television

34. In June 2008, the Department launched the UNifeed service on the Web, enabling broadcasters to easily download broadcast-quality video for their immediate use. This initiative is opening up a new means to distribute United Nations television clips from Headquarters, agencies and peacekeeping missions with suggested story lines and shot lists. UNifeed is thus reaching not only more broadcasters, but also many websites requiring moving images. Further:

- UNifeed made available the exclusive United Nations Television coverage of the return of the Secretary-General to his hometown during his recent official visit to the Republic of Korea.

35. Online video distribution will also make United Nations Television products more readily available to United Nations offices as they adapt to this new Web-based distribution. Since the deployment of the UNifeed service, 78 users have registered, and the feedback from broadcasters and press agencies such as Associated Press Television, Reuters Television, the BBC and the South African Broadcasting Corporation have confirmed their keen interest in it. To ensure the UNifeed service's full reliability and speedy performance, the Department has invested in a premier hosting service with server access nodes around the world designed to resolve the issue of video downloads which require large bandwidth capacities.

36. To capitalize on the latest trends in online distribution of video content, the Department has formed a creative partnership with YouTube/Google, leading to the creation of a branded United Nations Television channel scheduled to be launched in August. In a related effort, the Department worked with YouTube on a campaign in connection with the upcoming High-level Event on the Millennium Development

Goals, to broaden awareness of the Goals, especially among young audiences (see also box IV).

Box IV
Crossing the Divide

Crossing the Divide, featured in the Department of Public Information's monthly magazine television programme, *21st Century*, concerns a father in one of the refugee camps in Western Sahara and his daughter. As a result of a protracted territorial conflict, they had remained separated for almost 30 years. With the help of the United Nations, the two were finally reunited. When the story of their dramatic union was shown, people in many countries were deeply moved. Tova Biala of the Israeli Broadcasting Authority, in a thank you note to the Department of Public Information, noted that the story was "very touching and sensitively dealt (with)".

21st Century is now carried by more than 50 broadcasters, including BBC World, RTVE (Spain) and Fuji TV (Japan). Another staple television product of the Department, the *UN in Action* series of reports about the work of the United Nations and its agencies, continued to be featured by nearly 40 broadcasters around the globe.

D. United Nations photo and video materials

37. As part of the preparatory work for the sixtieth anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, archival photo, film and video materials have been retrieved for an array of projects developed in connection with the anniversary events. The Department of Public Information also worked closely with the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat to restore all archival materials of legal relevance. At the same time, in cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department gained access to high-resolution images from various peacekeeping missions.

38. The Department also installed state-of-the-art high-definition electronic photo and video displays in several high-traffic areas of the Secretariat building. The electronic boards now include UNifeed programmes, themed slide shows, wrap-ups of the latest news developments, and public service announcements. At the same time, the Department continued to mount photo exhibitions at United Nations Headquarters highlighting the Organization's key priorities.

E. UN News Centre

39. As part of its efforts to enhance performance of the UN News Centre in all official languages, the Department launched a redesigned French version of the site, in April, while work continued on the development of similar redesigns in other official languages. The English site registered over 1 million unique visitors in April, a pattern of usage that has been sustained in subsequent months despite

periodic problems of access to database-driven content. The Department has worked to resolve this problem in cooperation with the Information Technology Services Division. Other forms of news distribution featured on the UN News Centre, such as Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds, also showed steady growth. The number of subscribers to the associated e-mail news alerts service continued to grow, reaching 54,000 (English and French).

F. Placement of op-ed articles

40. The Department of Public Information continued to provide assistance in the placement of articles by senior United Nations officials in newspapers and in other media outlets around the world. Through the combined efforts of its staff in New York and at United Nations information centres, during the first half of 2008, 17 op-ed pieces, 9 of them by the Secretary-General, were published. The articles, which addressed many of the most urgent challenges facing the international community, appeared in a total of 277 newspapers around the globe in a wide range of languages. In particular:

- The Secretary-General's op-ed highlighting the challenges posed by the growing food crisis, entitled "The new face of global hunger", was carried by 41 newspapers on all continents.

G. Other services to media

Press releases

41. The Department continued to provide fast, accurate, balanced and comprehensive coverage, in the form of press releases, of all open intergovernmental meetings as well as press conferences, at Headquarters and in other locations. In the first six months of 2008, the Department produced a total of 2,113 such releases (8,732 pages) in English and French, including end-of-year round-ups of Security Council and General Assembly actions, which were distributed in hard copy and on the Internet. Over the past year, the Department held separate structured group discussions with key users of United Nations press releases: Member States, the media and non-governmental organizations. The discussions were part of an overall effort to solicit views on restructuring and updating the press release database so as to make its website more user-friendly and improve its access and search functions.

Press accreditation

42. In another vital service provided to the press, from January to June 2008, the Department issued 389 permanent and 604 temporary press accreditations, performed 2,775 liaison assignments, and distributed 130 media alerts to media organizations, mission press attachés and others in the United Nations system. The Department conducted 23 tours for groups of students and professional journalists and provided information and logistic assistance for 348 media stake-outs. During that period, 192 press conferences/briefings were held and attended by 4,963 journalists.

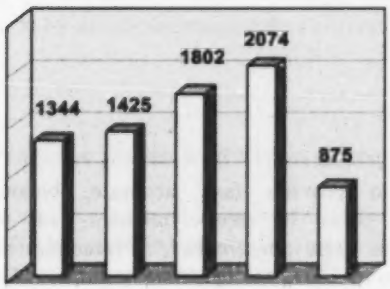
Ten Stories the World Should Hear More About

43. In March 2008, the Department issued its fourth annual list of "Ten Stories the World Should Hear More About", an initiative with the potential to capture the attention of a broad spectrum of media outlets around the world. The 2007 list covered a range of issues and geographical regions, some of which drew on humanitarian emergencies and conflict situations, while others focused on progress being made in protecting human rights or on efforts to combat diseases and epidemics.

IV. Outreach and knowledge-sharing services

A. Library and knowledge services

Figure IV
Participants in library training programmes, 2004-2008



44. The Department of Public Information, through its Personal Knowledge Management programme and through direct research support services of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, has been addressing the information needs of Secretariat and mission staff in a way that is customized for the user (see also figure IV). The Personal Knowledge Management initiative helps individuals understand how to better create, manage and access information and improve their utilization of the vast array of technology and information tools at their disposal. In 2008, training programmes were revised in response to the needs of clients and now include courses on the documents of the General Assembly and Security Council and on retrieving country information as well as introductory and advanced sessions on United Nations documentation. In preparation for the implementation of the capital master plan, consultations with Secretariat offices needing assistance in organizing their collections of United Nations documents are being provided as part of the library and knowledge services.

45. Access to high-quality information resources via electronic means continues to be facilitated by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, through the management of the United Nations System Electronic Information Acquisition Consortium. Resources are made available to users at Headquarters and worldwide through United Nations system offices. Electronic access will be especially crucial during the implementation of the capital master plan.

46. Providing access to important historic United Nations documentation remains a priority, which includes the objective of completing the digitization of all major Security Council documents by the end of March 2009. Close cooperation with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the United Nations Secretariat has increased the speed of digitization and has also prevented duplication of work.

iSeek

47. Further progress has been made in the direction of carrying out the One United Nations initiative through internal communications designed for the Secretariat. iSeek, the Secretariat intranet, is now launched as the default home page at most major duty stations, including Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Geneva, Nairobi, New York, Santiago and Vienna. The next steps will focus on improving access by the smaller regional offices and ensuring access to the main iSeek content by funds and programmes, as well as by Member States.

Depository libraries

48. Over the past three years, the depository library programme has coordinated a series of regional workshops promoting a new direction for the programme and giving increased focus to information outreach and new roles for libraries as United Nations partners. The most recent programme, with the support of the School of International Relations, State University of Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, in June 2008, brought together national and depository library directors from 11 countries in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and staff of United Nations Information Centre, Moscow and United Nations Office, Minsk, to encourage the promotion and sharing of information on and knowledge of the United Nations.

B. Outreach services

Relations of the Department of Public Information with non-governmental organizations

49. In the first half of 2008, the Department of Public Information associated 13 new non-governmental organizations, bringing the total number of non-governmental organizations associated with the Department to 1,664 as of July 2008. The NGO/DPI Executive Committee, an 18-member committee elected by the non-governmental organizations associated with the Department, acts as the liaison between the community of non-governmental organizations and the Department. The Department holds an annual three-day communications workshop and organizes the Annual DPI/NGO Conference in partnership with the Committee.

50. The sixty-first Annual DPI/NGO Conference, with the participation of non-governmental organizations associated with the Department of Public Information, will be held in Paris at UNESCO headquarters from 3 to 5 September 2008. This year's Conference, whose theme is "Reaffirming Human Rights for All: the Universal Declaration at 60", is being organized in partnership with the NGO/DPI Executive Committee, UNESCO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government of France.

51. The Department of Public Information also continued to hold weekly briefings for non-governmental organizations, providing them with a forum within which to exchange views on issues closely identified with the work of the United Nations worldwide. Briefings were held on a wide range of subjects, including inhuman labour practices, investing in women and girls, climate change and its impact on indigenous peoples, and the transatlantic slave trade.

Journalists' Fellowship Programme

52. For the twenty-eighth consecutive year, the Department will bring a group of journalists from developing countries to New York in September-October 2008 to participate in the Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme. The six-week Programme familiarizes junior and mid-level journalists with the work of the United Nations while giving them an opportunity to serve as temporary United Nations correspondents for their home media organizations. Countries selected for this year's programme are Bahrain, Brazil, Gabon, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kiribati, Mauritania, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Somalia, South Africa, Turkey and Turkmenistan. Since its inception in 1981, 388 journalists from 159 countries have participated in the Programme.

UN Works programme

53. The UN Works website has been redesigned and expanded as a platform for enabling the general public and key constituents, including United Nations organizations, UNICs, non-governmental organizations, grass-roots organizations, schools and advocacy groups, to share their stories and experiences on key issues in the United Nations agenda. Special web features include downloadable classroom resources, videos and advocacy toolkits.

The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme

54. The Department held its third annual observance of the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, with a ceremony and concert featuring the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music Symphony Orchestra, Tel Aviv University, in cooperation with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, along with a lecture on the theme "Civic Responsibility and the Preservation of Democratic Values". Four exhibitions were mounted (see also box V): the exhibition produced by the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme, which presented an overview of the tragedy in the context of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations; the exhibition entitled "BESA: A Code of Honour: Muslim Albanians who Rescued Jews during the Holocaust", co-sponsored by Yad Vashem and the Permanent Mission of Albania to the United Nations; the exhibition entitled "Carl Lutz and the Legendary Glass House in Budapest", co-sponsored by the Carl Lutz Foundation and the Permanent Missions of Hungary and Switzerland to the

United Nations; and the exhibition of Gennady Dobrov's "Memorial Drawings: Remembering the Holocaust Victims and their Liberators", co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations in cooperation with United Nations Information Centre, Moscow. In addition, the film entitled *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertranspor*, released by Warner Brothers, was screened.

55. The Department of Public Information also organized three week-long regional seminars on the history of the Holocaust and genocide prevention for United Nations information centres. Fully funded through extrabudgetary sources, these seminars will help United Nations information centre information officers raise awareness of the relevance of the Holocaust today and organize outreach activities that promote respect for diversity and human rights.

56. The programme's annual seminar on combating hatred held at United Nations Headquarters in November 2007 featured the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, who also contributed a discussion paper to the programme's series, as did Elie Wiesel, Nobel laureate, and Professor Edward Kissi of Ghana.

Box V
Holocaust commemoration stamp

At a press conference held at United Nations Headquarters on 28 January 2008, the Department of Public Information, in association with the United Nations Postal Administration, launched the Holocaust commemorative stamp. As issued by the Postal Administration, the stamp is available in English, French and German at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. Israel launched a national stamp on the same day, with a similar design based on the award-winning Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme logo.

Outreach Programme of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

57. The Department established the new Outreach Programme of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, as called for in General Assembly resolution 62/122 of 17 December 2007, with the aim of breaking the silence on slavery and the 400-year-long transatlantic slave trade, and educating present and future generations about its causes, consequences, lessons and legacy. A series of events were undertaken beginning on 25 March 2008, with a solemn ceremony on the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, at which the keynote address was delivered by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Goodwill Ambassador Harry Belafonte. A joint exhibition was mounted in the Visitors' Lobby under the themes "The Middle Passage: White Ships/Black Cargo" and "Amistad: The Story". The Department also convened a panel discussion and premiered the UNESCO film entitled *The Slave Route: A Global Vision*. It also hosted a book-signing and meet-the-author event with Dr. Verene Shepherd in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library auditorium. In addition,

the Department organized a global videoconference that involved young people aboard the Freedom Schooner *Amistad* who were retracing the slave trade route; experts and students in Canada, Cape Verde, Norway, Sierra Leone, Saint Lucia and the United Kingdom and at United Nations Headquarters; and students and classrooms connected through the Internet.

58. A commemorative poster entitled "Breaking the Silence on the Transatlantic Slave Trade: Lest We Forget" was distributed through the network of United Nations information centres and a songwriting competition was launched.[6]

Working with students

59. This year, the Department organized a student videoconference for the observance of World Environment Day 2008, bringing together students from high schools in Australia, Canada, Malaysia and the United States with students assembled at United Nations Headquarters. The event focused on innovative youth projects that are contributing to a reduction of greenhouse gases. A student videoconference is planned to mark the International Day of Peace on 21 September, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, peacekeeping missions and the Messengers of Peace programme.

60. The United Nations CyberSchoolBus website (www.un.org/cyberschoolbus), which is part of the Department's Global Teaching and Learning Project, remains central to education outreach activities for youth. The site continued to develop its use of live video chats, as an alternative to videoconferences, on a wide range of topics including human rights, disarmament, climate change, humanitarian aid, and youth issues. In addition, it launched a new educational site for secondary schools on disarmament and non-proliferation in partnership with the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

Guided tours and briefings for visitors

61. In respect of guided tours many changes were implemented this year. As part of an effort to provide guides with better contractual arrangements, the operation began a transition to working with a smaller crew of full-time staff. This led to the switch to a five-day operation (Monday through Friday) and a reduction in the number of visitors who could be accommodated for guided tours. The Department is working with the Department of Management and the architects of its capital master plan to ensure that the guided tours operation continues while the renovation of United Nations Headquarters is under way. A new route was launched on 1 August, owing to those renovations.

62. In conjunction with guided tours, visiting groups often request briefings by United Nations officials on a wide range of United Nations-related topics. These briefings, as well as outside speaking engagements and videoconferences, are organized by the Department, which manages the United Nations Speakers Bureau. From 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, it organized 509 in-house briefings, 49 outside speaking engagements and 25 videoconferences.

[6] For additional information, please see the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Programme of educational outreach on the transatlantic slave trade and slavery" (A/63/213).

63. The Department of Public Information is also responsible for the visitors services at Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna. The United Nations Information Service, Geneva continued to serve about 100,000 visitors annually. A survey conducted at the end of 2006 revealed that the majority of visitors had found the guided tour to be a rewarding and informative experience. At the Vienna International Centre, during the first seven months of 2008, the United Nations Information Service, Vienna conducted guided tours for 29,071 visitors and arranged 174 lectures. At the United Nations complex in Nairobi, between January and July 2008, 525 visitors took guided tours and attended special briefings.

Exhibitions

64. During this period, 14 exhibitions were displayed in the Visitors' Lobby, including two General Assembly-mandated exhibitions, related to the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme, and the Outreach Programme of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

C. Print and online products

UN Chronicle

65. The first issue of *UN Chronicle* in 2008, entitled "Partnership for Development", was an in-depth look at the eighth Millennium Development Goal. It followed up on Issue 4, 2007, which had examined progress in achieving the first seven Goals by 2015. The *UN Chronicle* print and online editions also extensively covered the activities of the General Assembly and redisseminated articles and educational links through thematic *UN Chronicle* e-alerts. From January to June 2008, the *UN Chronicle* online edition in English registered 907,929 page views, while the French online version, *Chronique ONU*: édition en ligne, registered 367,764 page views.

66. Taking note of the fact that the General Assembly has welcomed the movement towards educational outreach and the orientation of the *UN Chronicle*, in both the print and online editions, the Department proposes to build upon the extensive academic outreach potential inherent in the *UN Chronicle* by phasing it into a journal entitled "UN Affairs". A pilot edition of "UN Affairs" is in preparation and will be ready for further consideration by Member States in advance of the consideration of the item "Questions relating to information" in October 2008 by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee). The treatment of topics in "UN Affairs" by international experts would be a more in-depth one and would be oriented towards offering solutions and alternatives. With "UN Affairs", the Department intends to achieve a closer involvement of key audiences that have a role in effectively articulating the Organization's mandate, work and ideals.

Yearbook of the United Nations

67. The Department of Public Information will launch an online version of the *Yearbook of the United Nations* this year. The website, with its easy to use and user-friendly search engine, will open up all 59 editions of the *Yearbook* published so far to an even wider target audience.

Basic Facts About the United Nations

68. *Basic Facts About the United Nations*, now thoroughly revised and expanded, has been published in English under the new title *The United Nations Today*. Editions in French and Spanish are in preparation.

Graphic design

69. Visual branding remains an essential aspect of United Nations global communication campaigns. Graphic designers have made significant contributions, including the cover of the report of the MDG Africa Steering Group, a press kit for "Democracy and the United Nations", and posters for the Nobel Peace Prize timeline, and the International Day of Peace, as well as a visual identifier for the Annual DPI/NGO Conference whose theme will be the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

D. Sales and marketing

70. An important new pricing policy for United Nations publications has been introduced by the Department. This three-tier policy, while retaining the current level of pricing in developed countries, will allow for more affordable pricing in developing and least developed countries. The sales price in these countries will be reduced by 50 and 75 per cent, respectively, with the aim of making publications more economical and readily accessible to educational institutions, students, teachers and researchers. In addition to introducing the new policy, the Department distributed 50,000 copies of its publications catalogue, disseminated mini-catalogues on human rights, Millennium Development Goals, water, Africa and teacher resources, and exhibited at a number of international book fairs.

71. The Department had completed a major renovation of the Bookshop in the Palais des Nations in Geneva, with the store reopening on schedule in May. The new layout will allow for a more effective display of products and more sales space. The remodelling coincided with a cooperative marketing campaign with the Geneva Tourist Board to promote both the Visitors Service and the Bookshop.

72. In an initiative to increase the dissemination of the Organization's legal publications, the Department has established a co-publishing venture with a major international legal publisher. Not only will the publisher promote an online service that includes both current and historical publications of the Office of Legal Affairs, the International Court of Justice and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, but it will also send digital copies back to the United Nations for its own use in developing further outreach products.

V. A culture of evaluation

73. The Department continues to foster a culture of evaluation by increasing the number of evaluation projects that it completes each year and by providing training for staff on survey research, polling data and media analysis. Recently, it has strengthened its partnership with an international polling organization, WorldPublicOpinion.org, so as to ensure that it regularly receives global polling data and analysis on a pro bono basis. This partnership gives the Department the

opportunity to provide input on question formulation for worldwide polls. The Department is also working to improve its data-collection tools. For example, internal software tools are being developed that will enable more sophisticated web traffic evaluations.

74. The Department's annual programme impact review evaluates specific programmes and, from that evaluation, derives lessons and action points for application by programme managers. For example, an evaluation of the online teaching and learning project United Nations CyberSchoolBus elicited information about how teachers and other clients use the site and how its content and functionality can be improved. The evaluation also pointed to the need for continuing outreach efforts to ministries of education that promote the inclusion of teaching about the United Nations into the national curricula of Member States. Another evaluation consisting of media analyses on major climate change events enabled the Department and partner organizations to assess how key messages were disseminated by the media worldwide, and showed that a coordinated communications policy helped the United Nations "deliver as one". Lessons learned will guide the United Nations Communications Group on future communications strategies for upcoming events.

75. More recently, feedback from participants at the seventh annual meeting of the United Nations Communications Group held in Paris in June 2008 indicated that the meeting had been relevant to the communications work of its member organizations, and useful, in particular, for the networking opportunities that the meeting had provided. Survey results also indicated that focused sessions on, for example, case studies and lessons learned, that could lead to clearer communications strategies, would be valuable.

VI. Conclusions

76. The Department of Public Information, committed to achieving the greatest public impact, continues to tell the United Nations story by strategically communicating the work and purposes of the United Nations through innovative and creative means. This approach is driven by careful identification of its target audience, enhanced use of new information and communications technologies, and expanded partnerships with civil society. A culture of evaluation that emphasizes results-based performance is also helping the Department calibrate its products and activities more closely to the needs of its target audience.